



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/527,873	03/17/2000	Sohaila Shooshtarian	AGX-37	4182

7590 01/30/2004
Timothy A Cassidy
Dority & Manning PA
Post Office Box 1449
Greenville, SC 29602-1449

EXAMINER

LEE, HSIEN MING

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2823

DATE MAILED: 01/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/527,873	Applicant(s) SHOOSHTARIAN ET AL.	
	Examiner Hsien-Ming Lee	Art Unit 2823	

-- Th MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresponding address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4-13,42 and 44-63 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4-13,42 and 44-63 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Remarks

1. Claims 1, 2, 4-13, 42 and 44-63 are pending in the application.
2. All Rejections, as set forth in the previous Office Action, are withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-13, 44, 45, 48, 50-51, 53, 56-60, 62 and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mahawilli (US 5,814,365).

In re claims 1, 44, 45, 48, 50, 62 and 63, Mahawilli, in Figs. 1-6 and related text, expressly and impliedly teaches the claimed method for heat treating a semiconductor wafer, comprising :

- placing a semiconductor 12 in a thermal processing chamber 10 that is in communication with a plurality of lamps (tungsten-halogen lamps (not shown), col. 5, lines 4-15), the semiconductor wafer 12 defining a plurality of localized regions (i.e. discrete areas) along a radical axis;
- adjusting the temperature of the semiconductor wafer 12 to a predetermined temperature according to a predetermined heat cycle including a heating stage in which the semiconductor wafer 12 is heated by the plurality of lamps; and

- during at least one stage of the predetermined heat cycle, providing a gas through gas injection segment 36, 38, 40 to selectively control the temperature of at least one of localized regions of the semiconductor wafer 12 to minimize temperature deviation of the at least one localized region from the predetermined temperature (i.e. to achieve temperature uniformity across the wafer, col. 4, lines 60-65; col. 6, lines 13-19, 30-35, 40-48, 62-67; col. 9, lines 48-51; col. 10, lines 28-39), the gas being supplied by a gas injection assembly 34 above the semiconductor wafer 12 (Fig.3) and a plurality of gas outlets 36A-36D, 38A-38D, 40A-40D (Fig.5).

In re claims 2, 5, 51, 53, Mahawilli also teaches monitoring the temperature of said at least one localized region with a temperature sensing device 60 and 84 (col. 8, lines 36-37; col. 9, lines 39-43), said temperature sensing device 60 and 84 being in communication with a controller (col. 9, lines 39-51); and based on information received by said controller from said temperature sensing device 60 and 84, controlling the temperature of said at least one localized region according to said predetermined heat cycle; and controlling the flow rate of the gas (col. 10, lines 34-39).

In re claims 8-10, 56-58, Mahawilli also inherently teaches that said at least one localized region comprises less than about 50% or 25 % or 15 % of a cross-section of said semiconductor wafer because Mahawilli's method is to pursuit the temperature uniformity on every discrete area region across the entire wafer (col. 10, lines 36-37).

In re claim 11, Mahawilli also inherently teaches that said temperature of said at least one localized region is decreased during said heating stage of said predetermined heat cycle

Art Unit: 2823

because the temperature would increase and decrease within a predetermined cycle and is further controlled within a target range by controller during temperature controlling.

In re claims 12, 13, 59, 60, Mahawilli also inherently teaches that said predetermined heat cycle further comprises a cooling stage; and said temperature of said at least one localized region is increased and decreased during said cooling stage of said predetermined heat cycle because the temperature would be fluctuating during temperature adjustment via controller.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 4, 6, 7, 42, 46-47, 49, 52, 54, 55 and 61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mahawilli in view of Champetier et al (US 5,997,175).

In re claims 4 and 52, controlling the temperature of the gas is obvious because it is a matter of determining optimum process condition by routine experimentation with a limited number of species. In re Jones, 162 USPQ 224 (CCPA 1955)(the selection of optimum ranges within prior art general conditions is obvious) and In re Boesch, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980)(discovery of optimum value of result effective variable in a known process is obvious). Particularly, Mahawilli's method is to pursuit temperature uniformity across the entire wafer by selectively control gas rate with the assistance of a controller. One of the ordinary skilled in the art would have been motivated to control gas temperature to achieve temperature uniformity.

Art Unit: 2823

In re claims 6, 7, 54 and 55, these claims are prima facie obvious without showing that the claimed ranges achieve unexpected results relative to the prior art range. In re Woodruff, 16 USPQ2d 1935, 1937 (Fed. Cir. 1990). See also In re Huang, 40 USPQ2d 1685, 1688 (Fed. Cir. 1996) (claimed ranges of a result effective variable, which do not overlap the prior art ranges, are unpatentable unless they produce a new and unexpected result which is different in kind and not merely in degree from the results of the prior art). See also In re Boesch, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA) (discovery of optimum value of result effective variable in known process is ordinarily within skill of art) and In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233 (CCPA 1955) (selection of optimum ranges within prior art general conditions is obvious). Particularly, Mahawilli indicated that the method is to achieve temperature uniformity across the wafer. One of the ordinary skilled in the art would have been motivated to utilize Mahawilli's method to minimize the temperature deviation within an optimized range as claimed.

In re claims 42, 46-47, 49 and 61, Mahawilli substantially teach the claimed method, as stated above, but do not teach that the gas is supplied by a reflective device located below the semiconductor wafer.

Champetier et al, in an analogous art of heat treating processing, teach utilizing the reflective device 26 located below the semiconductor wafer 14 (Fig.1), wherein the reflective device 26 is constructed by coating a reflective layer 36 (i.e. highly reflective material such as stainless steel or optical film, col. 12, lines 25-35 and 55-60) on a pedestal.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of the ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to modify the method of Mahawilli by providing the gas assembly below the wafer instead of above wafer; and by coating the reflective layer on the pedestal or

Art Unit: 2823

platform, as taught by Champetier et al, so that the platform 28 of Mahawilli becomes the reflective device in a such way that gas outlets extending through the reflective device located below the wafer, since by this manner it would intense the heat radiation and ramp rate.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hsien-Ming Lee whose telephone number is 703-305-7341 (before Feb. 24, 2004) or 517-272-1863 (on and after Feb. 2, 2004). The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:00 ~ 5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Olik Chaudhuri can be reached on 703-306-2794. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-305-3431.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.

Hsien-Ming Lee
Examiner
Art Unit 2823



Jan. 24, 2004